

### In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A biomass gasification system in which thermal energy from a thermal source is applied to a gasification furnace ~~as means of generating to generate~~ fuel gas therein, and in which a slag feed system is incorporated ~~as means of supplying to supply~~ slag generated in ~~said the~~ gasification furnace to ~~said the~~ thermal source for use as a heat-generating fuel therein comprising:

a slag holding part ~~being~~ installed to ~~said the~~ slag feed system and accumulating the slag.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~The biomass gasification system according to claim 1, wherein the slag which has accumulated in ~~said the~~ holding part forms a seal between ~~the~~ internal environments of ~~said the~~ gasification furnace and ~~said the~~ thermal source.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~The biomass gasification system according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~wherein further comprising a detective means is provided in order~~detector to monitor an amount of slag in ~~said the~~ holding part.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~The biomass gasification system according to claim 3, wherein ~~said detective means~~the detector is structured as at least a pair of electrodes which come into contact with the slag to form an electrically conductive circuit.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~The biomass gasification system according to claim 3 ~~or 4~~, ~~wherein transport means is installed~~further comprising a transporter between ~~said the~~ holding part and ~~said the~~ thermal source ~~in order~~ to transport slag from ~~said the~~ holding part to ~~said the~~ thermal source when the amount of slag, as monitored by ~~said detective means~~the detector, exceeds ~~the an~~ amount required to form a seal between the internal environments of ~~said the~~ gasification furnace and ~~said the~~ thermal source.

6. (Currently Amended) A biomass gasification system operating method applied to a biomass gasification system in which thermal energy from a thermal source is applied to a gasification furnace ~~as means of generating~~to generate fuel gas ~~therein~~, and in which a slag feed system is incorporated ~~as means of supplying~~to supply slag generated in ~~said~~the gasification furnace to ~~said~~the thermal source for use as a heat-generating fuel therein, comprising:

~~a step that the slag~~ accumulating slag in a holding part installed to ~~said~~the slag feed system ~~forms and forming~~ a seal between ~~the~~ internal environments of ~~said~~the gasification furnace and ~~said~~the thermal source.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~The biomass gasification system operating method according to claim 6, wherein the slag is transported from ~~said~~the holding part to ~~said~~the thermal source when the amount of slag in ~~said~~the holding part exceeds that required to maintain a seal between the internal environments of ~~said~~the gasification furnace and ~~said~~the thermal source.

8. (New) A biomass gasification system comprising:

- a gasification furnace that generates fuel gas and slag from biomass;
- a thermal generator;
- a slag feed system that supplies slag generated in the gasification furnace to the thermal generator for use as a heat-generating fuel therein; and
- a slag holder connected between the slag feed system and gasification furnace that accumulates the slag.

9. (New) the biomass gasification system according to claim 8, wherein the slag which has accumulated in the holder forms a seal between internal environments of the gasification furnace and the thermal generator.

10. (New) The biomass gasification system according to claim 8, further comprising a detector to monitor an amount of slag in the holder.

11. (New) The biomass gasification system according to claim 10, wherein the detector comprises at least a pair of electrodes which contact the slag to form an electrically conductive circuit.

12. (New) The biomass gasification system according to claim 10, further comprising a transporter between the holder and the thermal generator to transport slag from the holder to the thermal generator when the amount of slag, as monitored by the detector, exceeds an amount required to form a seal between internal environments of the gasification furnace and the thermal generator.

13. (New) The biomass gasification system according to claim 8, further comprising a thermal energy supply conduit connected between the thermal generator and the gasification furnace to supply thermal energy to the gasification furnace.

14. (New) A biomass gasification system operating method comprising:  
supplying a biomass to a gasification furnace;  
generating fuel gas and slag in the gasification furnace;  
accumulating the slag in a holder connected to a slag feed system downstream of the gasification furnace and upstream of a thermal generator into which the slag is fed; and  
forming a seal between internal environments of the gasification furnace and the thermal generator by accumulating the slag in a selected amount.

15. (New) The biomass gasification system operating method according to claim 14, wherein the slag is transported from the holder to the thermal generator when the amount of slag in the holder exceeds that required to maintain a seal between the internal environments of the gasification furnace and the thermal generator.